

can't turn your head and forget about it. This morning, I participated in a commemoration of the Holocaust here in our Nation's Capitol. Let us remember so that we never forget.

I believe that in addition to pursuing our strategic interests and our trade interests, we must not forget that our status as a world power gives us a moral responsibility to defend human rights. I call upon my colleagues and all Americans to work toward a consensus on how we as a nation respond to acts of genocide internationally.

Looking away in Croatia was a failure when 250,000 Serbs were driven out. As President Clinton acknowledged, looking away in Rwanda was a mistake where almost a million people were killed between the Tutsi's and the Hutu's. And what about the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, and all the other areas of the world where such troubles exist? We have it in many, many places in the world.

Thus far, full engagement through bombing has been a failure in Kosovo. Our moral responsibility is to identify the means and the goals available to us to deal with such incidents before they escalate beyond peaceful resolution. We would be well-served—we would be well-served—to have a coherent policy to guide us in the future as to when we go in and when we do not go in.

Mr. President, what this country does in the name of NATO over the next several weeks in regard to Serbia and Kosovo will have a dramatic impact on this country's future. It is our obligation to the American people to exercise our due diligence before we commit to a course of action from which we cannot extricate ourselves. This is very, very serious business that we are now considering.

We should pray to the Holy Spirit for the enlightenment to make the right decision for our country, for southeast Europe, and for the world. Let us be constantly reminded of Jesus's exhortation on the Sermon on the Mount that "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

THE MILLENNIUM DIGITAL COMMERCE ACT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to recognize the efforts of Senator ABRAHAM who authored and spearheaded the effort to pass the Government Paperwork Elimination Act during the 105th Congress.

This good government measure, which the President signed into law last year, requires federal agencies to automate their forms and allows computer users to complete, electronically sign, and submit government forms online.

Aside from saving thousands of square feet of storage space, this landmark legislation will significantly reduce the amount of time it takes

Americans to complete government paperwork. The millions of hours freed up translates into billions of dollars saved over time. This legislation, which was supported by the Administration, will also help the federal government transition to a paperless document management system. One that allows agencies to collect and maintain forms and other records faster, easier, and cheaper.

Mr. President, Senator ABRAHAM, my friend and colleague, has once again demonstrated his leadership on electronic commerce issues by recently introducing the Millennium Digital Commerce Act. This bipartisan measure, which I cosponsored, is a direct outgrowth of and a natural extension to the Government Paperwork Elimination Act. It provides a national framework for online business to business transactions. This important interstate commerce measure provides legal standing for electronic signatures on contracts and other business transactions without preempting state law on intrastate commerce.

Electronic signatures are the equivalent of an online "royal seal." Electronic signatures are highly controlled and are far more secure than manual signatures. As my colleagues are aware, it is not difficult to mimic someone's handwritten "John Hancock." An electronic signature, however, is verifiable and it becomes invalid if any of the data in the electronic document is altered or eliminated. This revolutionary communication tool can also time and date stamp someone's unique electronic signature. It is an emerging technology that will serve as a springboard for electronic commerce.

Over the last few years, states have recognized the importance of authentication technology on trade and have already adopted rules governing its use. However, of the more than forty states that now have laws on the books, none has adopted the same approach. Congress should not allow an electronic signature hodgepodge to thwart the exponential growth occurring in electronic commerce.

In our fast-paced global and highly technical environment, where time is money, companies transacting business across state lines need assurance that electronically signed documents are fully and legally executable. Senator ABRAHAM's Millennium Digital Commerce Act will ensure that businesses located in different states are held to their agreements and obligations even if their respective states have different rules and approaches concerning electronically signed documents.

This much needed and timely legislation is a necessary precursor to state-by-state adoption of the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA). Once UETA is finalized, its enactment by all fifty states is not expected to occur for several years.

The Millennium Digital Commerce Act is an important interim step to-

wards eventual national uniformity. It merely establishes the legal certainty of electronic signatures when used for interstate business transactions. It strikes a necessary balance between a state's individual interests and the need for reciprocity among and between states. It fosters the expansion of trade on a state-wide, national, and international basis while promoting continued innovation.

The Millennium Digital Commerce Act is technology neutral and allows businesses to determine the methods they want to utilize for executing an online transaction. This legislation also establishes guiding principles for the use of electronic signatures for international transactions. A framework based on open, non-discriminatory standards. Lastly, Senator ABRAHAM's bill requires federal agencies to identify rules or regulations that impede electronic commerce and recommendations for improvements.

Mr. President, the United States cannot lag behind our industrial trading partners. Already, the United Kingdom has called for the legal recognition of electronic signatures.

I look forward to working with Senator ABRAHAM and Chairman MCCAIN as the Commerce Committee gives prompt consideration to this important pro-technology, pro-electronic commerce legislation.

The Millennium Digital Commerce Act will help move our nation's economy forward into the 21st Century. I hope the rest of my colleagues will support this responsible measure which will benefit both American consumers and American businesses.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, April 12, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,663,866,732,410.23 (Five trillion, six hundred sixty-three billion, eight hundred sixty-six million, seven hundred thirty-two thousand, four hundred ten dollars and twenty-three cents).

Five years ago, April 12, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,565,109,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred sixty-five billion, one hundred nine million).

Ten years ago, April 12, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,771,368,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred seventy-one billion, three hundred sixty-eight million).

Fifteen years ago, April 12, 1984, the federal debt stood at \$1,486,599,000,000 (One trillion, four hundred eighty-six billion, five hundred ninety-nine million).

Twenty-five years ago, April 12, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$473,967,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-three billion, nine hundred sixty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,189,899,732,410.23 (Five trillion, one hundred eighty-nine billion, eight hundred ninety-nine million, seven hundred thirty-two thousand, four hundred ten dollars and

twenty-three cents) during the past 25 years.

RETIREMENT OF RON KAVULICK

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess for the Easter/Spring break, a member of the Senate family ended his Senate career. Ron Kavulick, the Chief Reporter of Debates, retired.

As a matter of fact, Ron was to have ended his Senate career at the close of the 105th Congress, but remained in his position as the Senate conducted the impeachment trial of the President. Ron's expertise and dedication to detail were needed throughout the tedious proceedings of the trial.

Ron became an Official Reporter of Senate Debates in 1979 and served ably in that capacity until he was elevated to the position of Chief Reporter in 1995.

Ron has a very impressive reporting background. He was an official court reporter in the Air Force's JAG office. While employed with Alderson Reporting Company, Ron had the opportunity to work at the White House. Ron traveled extensively both with President Johnson and President Nixon.

Ron spent many hours and many nights working in the West Wing of the White House providing official White House transcripts of state dinners, press conferences and news briefings. Certainly Ron's experiences at the White House were helpful as he endured many a late night in the Senate.

My staff and I personally cannot thank Ron enough for his service. Since my arrival at the Senate in 1987, I have relied on Ron's institutional memory and unfailing kindness. He has always been available, day or night, for any help that my staff or I needed. It would be impossible for me to count the times that Ron and his very able staff have assisted us. Having said that, no one deserves a rest from the long, sometimes grueling hours of the Senate more than Ron Kavulick. I can attest to the fact that he will be greatly missed here in the Senate.

As Ron goes on to enjoy time with his wife, Pat, his children and granddaughter, Allison, I thank him for his diligence and perseverance in his service to his country and for his friendship to us here in the Senate. My staff joins me in wishing him all the best in the years to come.

Ron, good luck and Godspeed.

TRIBUTE TO ISABEL "BELLA" ROMERO

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a truly remarkable woman, Mrs. Isabel "Bella" Romero, of Greeley, Colorado. This gallant woman's life was prematurely cut short last year after courageously fighting ovarian cancer for six years. Bella's dedication to improving our world transcends her career as an inspirational middle

school principal and educator and as a woman devoted to her family. Her selfless pursuit of bringing out the best in all she came in contact with has made her passing that much greater. She is fondly missed by her friends and family, but her legacy lives on through all those whose lives she touched.

I ask unanimous consent that an article from the Denver Post on this remarkable Coloradan be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Denver Post, Mar. 25, 1999]

BELLA ROMERO'S LIFE DISPLAYED THE
ELOQUENCE OF ACTION

(By Tomás Romero)

"In our world of big names, curiously, our heroes tend to be anonymous."—Historian Daniel J. Boorstin

Americans tend to compartmentalize their emotions too much: Feeling patriotic on July 4, remembering the deceased on Memorial Day and putting on a happy face for the holidays.

Hispanics, though, see tragedy and joy as part of an ever-intertwined continuum—so why not acknowledge them concurrently as we do with *Los Días de Los Muertos*? Thus, just before Christmas, I've chosen to write a belated tribute to one of those anonymous heroes described by Boorstin. After all, what time could be better to celebrate a woman who gave so many gifts to so many people?

My friend Isabel "Bella" Romero of Greeley died this year after an unbelievably valiant six-year battle fought against a cruel, unforgiving foe—ovarian cancer.

Action is eloquence. And the eloquently lovely manner with which Bella Romero conducted her life journey must be remembered: an unmatchable, deliberately executed, constantly positive pattern for living.

She was a loving wife to Ray, a loving mother to Denny, Mark, Juan and Andrea, and a passionate advocate for every school child in need of a good past. As a Longmont middle school principal, Bella knew that a child without a good past couldn't easily aspire to a better future.

Bella was not related to me by blood, but she was my sister in spirit since we were kids together in Brighton. This winsome girl was married and a mother by age 16. She worked in a cannery to help Ray attend the then-Colorado State College in Greeley. It was an experience filled with bare food cupboards, living in dingy basements. Ray became a teacher/university administrator and successful civic leader.

Then it was Bella's turn to bring dreams to fruition. "I've decided to go to college and become a teacher," she announced. Armed with a GED, she began a daily round trip from Brighton to Greeley. Family needs still came first. Only when everyone was asleep would she sit at a kitchen table to study. In three years, Bella received her diploma—with a straight A average. Later she fulfilled another aspiration and became a respected principal—one of the state's best. Probably her greatest skill was being able to defeat an enemy by making them a friend.

Then came sudden, unexpected pain and a doctor's diagnosis of ovarian cancer. Bella's war had begun. With prayer, traditional medicine, visualization, holistic health tactics—and, yes even laughter—Bella beat back her vicious enemy. Tauntingly, cancer would retreat and then return. Bella wept when she was finally forced to give up her position as principal. "It was six years of increasingly difficult anguish for us and pain for her," husband Ray says.

"Death be not proud," I said in a eulogy. "Bella's intent was never to defeat death—no one does—it was to win at life." Through study and reflection, Ray believes, Bella found a spiritually higher level—a place beyond pain's reach.

She endured beyond our comprehension to understand why she simply didn't just let go. Never did she relinquish personal power or allow physical frailties to become spirit-dominating indignities. University of Northern Colorado President Howard Skinner gladly came to her home when asked to join forces for worthwhile programs. Bella wanted to leave Earth on her terms—"thoroughly used up," as George Bernard Shaw wrote in a poem.

Every grandchild of Bella's received a personal videotaped message. So, too, were family members counseled, parents called from a hospital bed and told goodbye. When visitors came to her, she found strength to console us and offer advice. When we'd been prepared to get on with our lives without her, she left us.

It's been six months since Bella died, and sister Anna Lee still mourns for a best friend.

Bella was Cathy Gleesing's mentor and school principal. Cathy became a valued friend and was always there to offer love and support in time of trying need. Bella "led with elegance, grace and style," Cathy says. "I wish for Bella when I strive to be excellent in my work, mood and relationships."

In other words, always.

Ray lost a beloved companion, one who at day's end every day for 40 years would join her partner to talk and reinforce *familia* and values.

We have all lost, and during this holiday season we need to learn from her gift.

THANKING KIM KOIVISTO FOR A JOB WELL DONE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, Today marks the final day of work in the Senate for Kim Koivisto, the associate director to the Democratic Steering and Coordination Committee. I didn't want the day to pass without taking a moment to thank Kim for a job well done.

The Democratic Steering and Coordination Committee is the liaison office between Senate Democrats and a good portion of the rest of the country, including representatives of state, county and local governments and people from every imaginable interest group. The committee is an important part of our caucus's efforts to talk with and listen to Americans from varying perspectives.

Kim has worked as associate director of the committee for the past two years. During that time, she has consistently demonstrated the highest level of commitment, professionalism and creativity. She has worked most intensively on women's, Hispanic and labor issues.

One highlight of Kim's tenure is the creation of a new outreach program to strengthen relations between our caucus and national Hispanic organizations, Latino elected officials and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. She also used her fluency in Spanish to translated materials into Spanish, and to organize Spanish-language press conferences for Senate and House Democrats.